

What Do You Say After Hello? Use an Elevator Pitch!

An elevator pitch is a short summary used to quickly and simply introduce yourself professionally when networking. The term "elevator pitch" references the average time of an elevator ride - 30 to 45 seconds. When developing an elevator pitch, consider including the following categories:

Introduction: give your name and point to an area of the company you are interested in

Education: identify your educational background and relevant credentials

Experience and Skills: articulate your relevant skills gained through work, academics and volunteer activities

Differentiator (optional): state what separates you from everyone else

The Value Add: point out what you can bring to the company

Your elevator pitch should include a smile, eye contact and a firm handshake!

Here's a sample elevator pitch:

Hello, my name is Maryam Mohammad. I'm in my final year of Chemistry and Biology at Western University. I recently landed a research position at the Shoesmith Electrochemistry lab because of my strong performance in analytical chemistry. I developed technical lab and critical thinking skills which led to a fourth-year thesis project, researching the integrity of nuclear waste containers. I communicated my results in a written thesis and oral defense. I've had five years of customer service experience which developed my interpersonal and communication skills with diverse populations. As a program assistant on campus, I work in a team and independently on various projects and events, such as piloting a peer mock interview service to coach students. I would love to use my skills to benefit my next employer.

(Question) Would you be able to tell me more about internship opportunities at your company?

Develop an Elevator Pitch for Yourself

Write your own elevator pitch and practice it with others. Get feedback, adjust and rehearse your pitch until it feels natural. Leave the listener engaged by your introduction! Have follow up questions ready (see reverse).

Introduction:

Education:

Experience and Skills:

Differentiator (optional):

The Value Add:

What Do You Say After Your Elevator Pitch? Ask Intentional Questions!

Trends questions function as effective openers.

- What trends are impacting your business right now?
- How has your business changed since you started?
- How do you think your business will change in the next several years?

Insight questions become slightly more personal, rather than strictly business related. They build rapport with the recruiter and allow you to demonstrate a genuine interest in their experience and insights.

- What surprises you most about your job/employer?
- What's the best lesson you've learned on the job?

Advice questions are similar to Insight questions and add a level of empathy. They're asking the recruiter to put themselves in your shoes, going beyond vague advice for what you should do next, and identifying actual steps they would take if in your position.

- What do you know now that you wish you'd known when you were my age or in my position?
- If you were me, what would you be doing right now to maximize your chance of breaking into this industry?

Resource questions are designed to identify where your contacts go when they need information about their industry, function or business. If you gained their trust, the recruiter might give you their business card and offer to speak to you again in the future or connect you with their colleagues.

- What resources should I be sure to look into next?
- What next steps would you recommend for someone in my situation?
- Is there someone else you would recommend I speak with?

Assignment questions focus on gaining usable information. Their goal is to provide industry specific language and insight into the important work occurring at the company. The answers you get from these questions build your awareness of in-demand projects at your targeted employers.

- What projects have you done for your employer that you feel added value?
- Have any projects increased in popularity recently at your organization?
- Have you had interns or contractors in the past? If so, what sort of projects have they done?

Tip: Always follow up! Consider referencing the brief meeting you enjoyed at the Career/Job Fair in your follow-up correspondence and articulate what you learned from responses to your questions. This tells the recruiter you were listening and reflected on their responses and gives you the opportunity to highlight additional and relevant skills.

(This intentional question content came from the book *The 2-Hour Job Search* by Steve Dalton,)